

Choosing Your Career

"Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life." — Confucius



Choose a Career that Works for You

Planning and preparation are keys to a successful career. Taking time and effort to plan your career will help you choose something that you'll enjoy. Here are steps to get started:

1. **Get to know yourself.** Self-assessment begins by gathering information about you. You need to understand your personality type and preferences, know your interests and hobbies and identify your skills, talents and accomplishments.
Utahfutures.org and mynextmove.org are excellent online tools that feature user-friendly assessments to identify career options that may prove to be satisfying and rewarding.
2. **Explore your options.** Research the career options from your self-assessment. To see the job outlook, education and training requirements, and wage information, as well as information about different careers, look at jobs.utah.gov, onetonline.org and utahfutures.org. Utahfutures features career videos and employer profiles for many Utah companies. You can also conduct informational interviews, job shadow and network to find out more about different careers.
3. **Clarify your values and prioritize your needs.** What are you looking for in a job and, ultimately, your career? A certain schedule and hours? A family-friendly employer? A specific pay rate with benefits? List these things in order of importance. Determine which ones are non-negotiable to you. Understand that in order to have one thing, you may have to sacrifice another.
4. **Plan your action and act on your plan.** Commit to do one career-building task every week, such as growing your professional network, increasing your skills, talking to others about potential opportunities and learning more about your industry. Set daily goals, keep track of your progress and create a system of people and resources that support you and your career goals.



To-Do List:

- Take the time to plan your career and future.
- Get the facts about which careers are in demand, what they pay and more.
- Find a career that matches your interests.

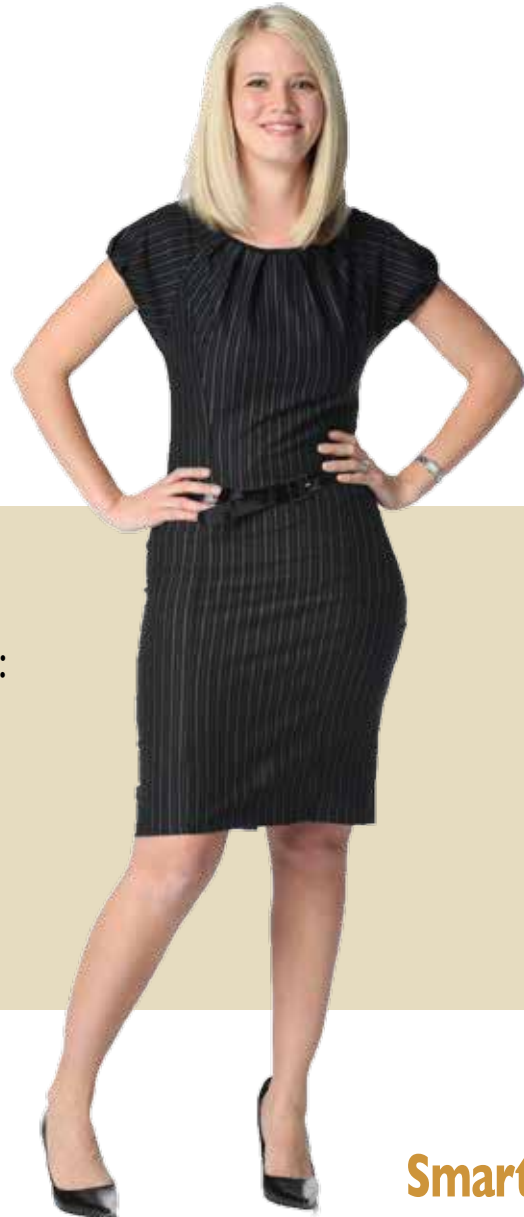
5. **Gain practical experience related to the career you want.**

- Select a job that offers skill development, knowledge and experience that support your career goals.
- Pursue education and training to move toward your career goal.
- Find a job with a company that offers tuition reimbursement.
- Gain experience by volunteering, participating in an internship or participating in on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Join an association in your career field.

6. **Track your progress.** Take time to reflect and assess your career direction. Write down daily achievements in a notebook, in a day planner, on a calendar or in a journal. Reread your notes periodically to see your accomplishments and evaluate your progress. Ultimately, you want a balance between your lifestyle and your career. When evaluating your progress, make sure you've included everything that might be useful in choosing a career that works for you.

7. **Take responsibility for your own career.**

Shape your career; don't let it shape you. Decide what you want a career to be, and watch for opportunities to reach your goals. True, you take on roles assigned by your employers, but you can also make roles for yourself that advance your career. Be on the lookout and seize opportunities that help you get where you want to go. Taking the time now to plan and prepare will pay off in the future.



Resources to help you choose a career:

- jobs.utah.gov/information
- onetonline.org
- utahfutures.org
- mynextmove.org

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Get the Facts to Help You Make Career Decisions

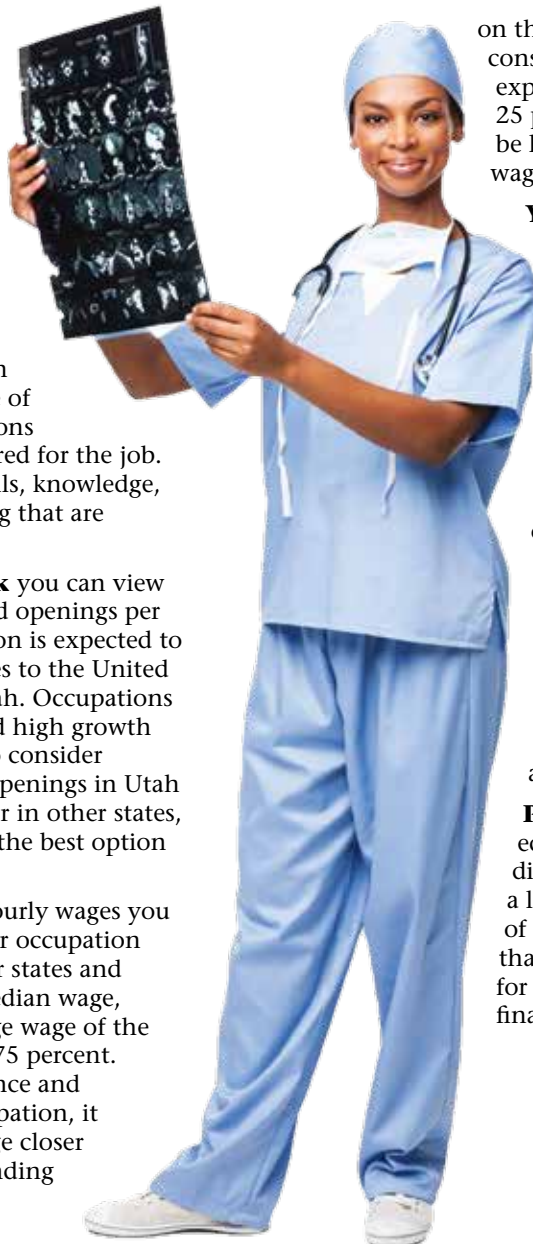
Visit jobs.utah.gov or utahfutures.org to learn about available jobs, education, training and skills. Utahfutures allows you to create your own profile and save important information as you explore different careers.

Search for occupations you are interested in and view the following information:

An overview of the occupation helps you understand what type of work activities, working conditions and physical demands are required for the job. You can also learn about the skills, knowledge, licensing, education and training that are generally required.

On the employment outlook you can view job growth and average expected openings per year in Utah that each occupation is expected to have and compare these averages to the United States and local areas within Utah. Occupations with many annual openings and high growth rates are jobs you might want to consider pursuing. Some jobs show few openings in Utah but many openings nationally or in other states, which means moving might be the best option to find work in a specific field.

Wages information shows hourly wages you can expect to earn in a particular occupation in the United States, Utah, other states and local areas. You can view the median wage, the average wage and the average wage of the bottom 25 percent and the top 75 percent. If you don't have much experience and background in a particular occupation, it is likely that you will earn a wage closer to the bottom 25 percent, depending



on the geographic area. If you have considerable experience, you can expect to earn more than the bottom 25 percent. This wage information can be helpful in negotiating a starting wage when you are offered a job.

You can find related occupations if you are in the process of making career decisions but are not familiar with all of the types of jobs available. This information is also helpful if you want to move to a new job but are not sure where you can transfer your skills. Search military occupations at mynextmove.org to find military occupations that match the job you are researching.

Utah job openings provides a current list of job openings from the Department of Workforce Services. Employers usually post their own jobs, so requirements and pay vary. You can immediately apply for jobs if you are ready.

Programs of study is a list of education and training programs directly linked to an occupation plus a list of other appropriate programs of study. You can find Utah schools that provide education and training for a specific occupation and ways to finance your education.



Assess Your Interests

Interest Profiler: If you need help assessing your interests, take the quiz on the interest profiler at mynextmove.org/explore/ip. This quiz uses the Holland Codes to ask questions about your interests to help you identify which work personality you might have and related occupations.

The Holland Codes is a system that classifies jobs into job categories, interest clusters or work personality environments. In the Holland Model, these categories represent work personalities.

The work personalities are:

- **Realistic** people are usually assertive and competitive and are interested in activities requiring motor coordination, skill and strength. People with a realistic orientation usually prefer to work a problem through by doing something rather than talking about it or sitting and thinking about it. They like concrete approaches to problem-solving rather than abstract theory. They tend to be interested in scientific or mechanical rather than cultural and aesthetic areas. They like to work with *things*.
- **Investigative** people like to think and observe rather than act, to organize and understand information rather than to persuade. They tend to prefer individual rather than people-oriented activities. They like to work with *data*.
- **Artistic** people are usually creative, open, inventive, original, perceptive, sensitive, independent and emotional. They do not like structure and rules, like tasks involving people or physical skills, and are more likely to express their emotions than others. They like to think, organize and understand artistic and cultural areas. They like to work with *ideas and things*.
- **Social** people seem to satisfy their needs in teaching or helping situations. They are different than R and I types because they are drawn more to seek close relationships with other people and are less apt to want to be really intellectual or physical. They like to work with *people*.
- **Enterprising** people are good talkers and use this skill to lead or persuade others. They also value reputation, power, money and status, and will usually go after it. They like to work with *people and data*.
- **Conventional** people like rules and regulations and emphasize self-control. They like structure and order and dislike unstructured or unclear work and interpersonal situations. They place value on reputation, power or status. They like to work with *data*.

Assessments using Holland Personality Styles link vocational interests to job families. Assessments use a two- or three-letter RIASEC or Holland Code. Different assessments provide information on the relationship between job personalities and key characteristics, college majors, hobbies, abilities and related careers.

Reference: John Holland (1985) *Making Vocational Choices* (2nd ed.) Odessa, FL.: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.